

## Central California Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Minutes

DATE(S): 10/15/2004 – 10/16/2004

LOCATION: Fort Hunter Liggett, CA

### 8:00 a.m.: Introductions/Approve Agenda/Approve minutes from previous meeting

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#### CENCAL RAC MEMBERS

Helen S. May  
Bill Vanherweg  
Carl Twisselman  
Mary Gorden (Chair)  
Dwight McNaughton  
Leigh Marymor  
Walt Pachucki

#### BLM

Bob Beehler  
Tim Moore  
Terry Russi  
Sky Murphy  
Tony Danna  
Deane Swickard  
George Hill  
Ron Huntsinger  
Brian White  
Erik Zaborsky

#### Public/Org.

Jim Gorden  
Ron Cash  
Brian Laneve  
Ed Tobin

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#### RAC Approves Agenda

Review of minutes from previous meeting postponed until the following morning.

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## 9:00 a.m.: State Office Update – Tony Danna; Deputy State Director

Handout; Planning Process

Handout; Routes of travel in land use plans (includes map of CA BLM planning areas).

General discussion of the BLM's goal to keep Resource Management Plans up-to-date; time sensitive plans, high sensitive areas: National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), National Conservation Areas (NCA), National Monuments.

### *QUESTIONS;*

*Where to access land use plans?*  
*`ON-LINE or by request.*

*“Plan completed” indicates a signed Record of Decision (ROD)?*  
*YES*

### Planning Process Review

- Scoping
- Alternative Development
- Draft Resource Management Plan / Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DRMP/DEIS)
- Public Comment Period
- Final Resource Management Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement (FRMP/FEIS)
- Record of Decision (ROD)

### Cultural Resources Protocol

BLM is in the process of negotiating with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to renew a Programmatic Agreement (PA) that expires on October 25, 2004. The focus of the PA is for protection of cultural resources, as required by Section 106 of the Federal Land Policy & Management Act (FLPMA).

### *QUESTION;*

Does SHPO (state ) policy become BLM (federal) law?  
Through negotiations, state policy is elevated to a national level.

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## 9:20 a.m. Field Managers Update

Bob Beehler (Hollister)

- Review of Fire Management Plan (FMP) relationship with US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biological Opinion
- Species/Cultural Resources Certification

Terry Russi (Bishop)

- Completed FMP
  - o Utilized a broad approach to public involvement
  - o Review of recent fire history and management success
- California/Nevada Bi-State Conservation Plan
  - o Demonstrates to USFWS that BLM is actively involved in habitat management
- Fuel break projects underway
- Pleasant Valley Pit (unplanned campground development)
  - o Result of growing popularity of rock climbing/bouldering.
- Interagency Visitor Center
  - o New Visitor Services Employee in Cooperation w/USFS and BLM
- Owens Lake – Keeler – groundwater pumping issue.
- Mule Springs Pond Renovation
- North Mono Basin; power plant settlement.
- Decision to overturn the voluntary closure of Volcanic Tableland Bluff because there was no valid reason to maintain closure based on the human use and impacts to raptors.

Ron Huntsinger (Bakersfield)

- Piedras Blancas (PB)
  - o Formal meeting with non-profit organization(s) for future management of PB as self-sustaining with volunteer support
  - o BLM involved in minor role for review of final agreement to transfer Hearst Corp. property west of Highway 1 because of influence on PB.
  - o PB public access status: Tours, one day/month: capacity=110
  - o Hearst transfer includes proposed California Coastal Trail. BLM concerned about the impact this trail could have on the PB Lighthouse and a strategically important communication site.
  - o BLM anticipates a National Monument /Historic Register Status for PB Lighthouse, which will increase valuable funding opportunities.
- Carrizo Plain Draft RMP: Anticipated release date November 2004.
  - o Issues: grazing, Painted Rock, public access
  - o Acquisitions underway to increase public holdings in the National Monument
  - o Consultation with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and CA Dept. of Fish & Game for a revised grazing program.
- Low activity fire season in the Bakersfield Resource Area has dual effect;
  - (i) benefit to public safety,
  - (ii) low funding, limited ability to implement projects
- Fee Demonstration project in Three Forks area.
  - o Result of gang congregation and increased trespass conflicts.
  - o Achieved desired effect of 50% use reduction.
- 2003-2004 was an average recreational use season for Bakersfield.

*QUESTION;*

*OHV use in Carrizo Plain no longer an issue?*

- *National Monument proclamation is clear that OHV use is limited to roads, and there is a general understanding that the only proposed closures are those that enter sensitive habitat.*

Deane Swickard (Folsom)

- Yuba Gold Fields
  - o Proposed Training Center: current search for a contractor to conduct the EIS for the facilities.
- Completed Red-legged Frog Habitat Plan
  - o CDF fire protection issue (approved water sources).
- River trail from Marshall Gold to Sutter's Fort near completion (~8 miles).
- Big Oak Flat Mill Restoration Project (North entrance to Yosemite).
- Conservation easement acquired for Cosumnes River (~1800 acres for the purpose of enhancing the entire watershed).
- North Fork American River Acquisition
  - o Nichols Property: one of the last Wild & Scenic River in-holdings (appraised at \$1000/acres, sold at \$500/acre!!!)
- Emerging Issue: West Nile Virus and Vector control in wetland areas in close proximity to residential areas.
- PROPOSED RAC TOUR: South Fork American River for Wild & Scenic River values due to the anticipation of controversy.

Prior to break, Mary Gorden asked RAC members to think about Bob Beehler's proposal to sanction a Clear Creek Management Area Technical Resources Team and how RAC could advise BLM on particular issues.

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10:00 a.m. BREAK

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10:25 a.m.: EPA Health Risk Assessment, Tim Moore

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is conducting a health risk assessment for the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA) that will support a combined ecological health risks from Mercury (Hg) study.

Presentation;

- Geochemical characteristics of CCMA.
- Characteristics of asbestos.
- EPA Personal Exposure Limit (PEL)
- Abandoned mine land recovery.
- Asbestos/Air Sampling/Decontamination

*QUESTIONS;*

*What is the relationship of serpentine deposits and asbestos?*

*Not all serpentine contains asbestos, only on a case-by-case basis.*

*Are BLM's mercury remediation projects coordinated and/or permitted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board?*

*CA State sets the standard for reduction by establishing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).*

*Is BLM concerned about liability of continuing recreational OHV use because of the asbestos?*

*Yes, one of the reasons for the EPA health risk assessment is to inform visitors of the risk.*

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California Coastal National Monument – Rick Hanks, Monument Manager

- Draft RMP/ Draft EIS Overview
- Public Meetings Schedule
- Partnerships
- What CCNM IS & IS NOT
- Major Focus
  - o Preservation (Management)
  - o Landscape (Ecosystem)
  - o Partnerships (Collaboration)

*QUESTIONS;*

*What are the threats to the CCNM?*

*Basic human activities that would disturb plants and animals on off-shore rocks and islands.*

*What about abalone gathering?*

*CA Dept. of Fish & Game's jurisdiction. BLM's goal is to manage the abalone divers, and others who would possibly climb onto rocks with nesting/habitat value.*

*Why the National Monument designation?*

*Antiquities Act only allows the President to apply the National Monument designation. BLM pushed for National Conservation Area designation, but was unsuccessful.*

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12 p.m. BREAK FOR LUNCH

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Hollister RMP Revision – Sky Murphy

- Overview of RMP History, Hollister Management Units, Current Management Situation
- Preliminary Issues: Recreation, Energy/Minerals, Fire, Land Tenure, etc.

- Scoping Meeting Results (Attendance: 40 +/-/Written Comments: 30+/-)

*QUESTION;*

*Does anyone really look at these plans?*

*All BLM projects and activities must conform with the land use plan/RMP,  
so it is often reviewed as a necessary component of any environmental  
analysis.*

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Clear Creek Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment & Draft Environmental  
Impact Statement – Brian White

Clear Creek Management Area

Use History

Current Recreational Uses

Major Issues

- Threatened/Endangered Species
- Soils/Erosion
- Riparian Ecosystems

Draft RMP/EIS Alternatives

- Alt. A: Preferred Alternative
- Alt. B: Enhanced Resource Protection
- Alt. C: Enhanced Recreation
- Alt. D: No Action

Public Comment Period Ends November 15, 2004.

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2:00 p.m. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ed Tobin, Salinas Ramblers Motorcycle Club

Handout; 'Ed's Blog' Entries

- 10/2/2004
- 10/1/2004
- 9/30/2004
- 9/25/2004
- 9/10/2004
- 8/22/2004
- 8/07/2004
- 7/28/2004
- 7/13/2004
- 6/10/2003
- 5/31/2003

Mr. Tobin offered suggestions on several issues where RAC can provide support for BLM.

(Clear Creek Management Area)

- Coordinating resources where and when they are needed.
- Include OHV recreation specialists in route designation.
- Keep RAC member(s) involved with route designation to report information to BLM.

(Joaquin Rocks)

- Important recreation resources.
- Not appropriate for OHV use.
- Potential for improved public access.
- Equal access for all interest groups.

(CCMA Draft RMP & Draft EIS)

- Concerns about public participation in planning process, OHV community treated like second class citizens.
- Availability of Scoping Report and Record of Decision
- OHV community concerned that current alternatives may impact National Enduro events.
- Safety issue from head-on collisions.

Brian LaNeve, Vice Chairperson, California Native Plant Society, Monterey Bay Chapter

Mr. Laneve urges RAC to carefully examine the OHV issue on public lands (with emphasis on CCMA).

- CNPS does not want to delay the Plan Amendment process.
- CNPS believes that the 1999 Record of Decision is an illegal document because it does not adhere to BLM's National OHV Strategy.
- Plan Amendment process began in 1991, BLM must take action now!

Ron Cash, CCMA Technical Resources Team

Handout; CCMA Comment Sheet

- Draft RMP/EIS does not adhere to 1999 ROD.
- Prefers no action.
- Implement ROD.
- Reference Handout

*QUESTION(S);*

*Was the CCMA TRT useful?*

*Tobin: Mostly head-butting. Facilitation would be better, instead of one-way information dissemination. Focus management in most heavily used areas. Management should not stop, process is flawed. (Eg; In-holder issue: route network cannot rely on public access through private lands. BLM must improve communication with private landowners.) San Benito Mountain Research Natural Area restricts access to the best riding areas in Clear*

*Creek Management Area. 1986 Plan calls for BLM to acquire in-holdings from willing sellers. Now BLM will not acquire contaminated lands?*

*LaNeve: TRT was valuable in bringing people together. The problem was that BLM was the meeting organizer, but a similar group is necessary.*

*Cash: TRT was good for collaboration. A major problem has been the deterioration of TRT meetings. Another problem has been the rate of BLM staff turnover.*

*Who manages OHV grants?*

*Tobin: California State OHV Commission administers the Green Sticker Program.*

*Hill: Hollister Field Office receives an average of approximately \$350,000/yr.*

*Scoping for CCMA Draft RMP/EIS?*

*Murphy: 1999 ROD established Limited Use designation for CCMA. Scoping began through an environmental assessment (Notice of Intent, April 29, 2003). As a result of the environmental assessment, BLM determined it would be necessary to conduct a full environmental impact statement for route designation in CCMA.*

*Hill: Environmental assessment generated 270+ comments, which indicates good public involvement for any type of planning activity.*

*Dwight McNaughton:*

*Even as an OHV enthusiast, the reality is that OHV use is extremely difficult to manage.*

*Tobin: True, that is why BLM and organized groups must improve outreach/education. Plus, BLM needs to hire a Project Manager for CCMA.*

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3:00 p.m. Revisit Clear Creek Management Area Draft RMP/EIS Presentation

*QUESTIONS;*

*Does BLM support an Area Manager for CCMA? How would funding for this position continue?*

*Beehler: Yes, Brian White is the new CCMA Coordinator. Funding for his position has been included in the annual budget and could be supported through fee demonstration programs in CCMA.*

*Bill Vanherweg;*

*"I think it's insane for BLM to require employees to [follow OSHA standards for exposure to asbestos] and not be concerned about lawsuits from the public."*

**BREAK**

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3:15 p.m. Consideration of Advisory Subcommittee for CCMA

*QUESTION;*

*Are there any alternative methods to gather input from the public/organizations?*

*Hill: Organized groups can invite BLM to group meetings.*

*Beehler: Emphasize advice/support from groups on implementation activities. BLM can develop information on the issue for RAC to consider sanctioning an advisory group at a later date. Must have RAC approval (quorum) to meet legal requirements.*

*A general group discussion followed that highlighted the time and resources commitment necessary to sanction a RAC sub-committee and successfully resolve issues in CCMA.*

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3:30 p.m. San Joaquin Valley Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) ` Discussion Panel

Sarge Green, Manager, Westside Resource Conservation District (WRCD)

History – Westlund Water District is the WRCD's largest landholder (~1 million acres). BLM is the second largest landholder in the WRCD. CA Aqueduct runs through WRCD, so watershed health is critical. Watershed activities primarily funded by CALFED.

Shelly Talbert, CRMP Manager

Watershed Restoration Projects Overview – Use of Grant Funds (9 years)

- Mapping/Assessments
- Goals & Objectives
  - o Characterize resource conditions
  - o Encourage landowners involvement
- Partnership with BLM
  - o Salt-cedar removal
  - o Arroyo-Pasajero Watershed Group
    - Help from RAC welcome!

*QUESTION;*

*Does the WRCD have a good handle on upstream activities impacts on downstream projects?*

*Green: Good question. All upstream activities must be considered and/or managed to compliment restoration projects, or they could be counter-active to restoration goals.*

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## Cultural Resources – Erik Zaborsky

### Handouts;

- National Register Bulletin
- Traces of the Past
- California Archaeology
- Select Books

### Presentation;

- National Historic Preservation Act
- National Environmental Policy Act
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act

#### Hollister Field Office

- OHV Management
- Rangeland Mgt.
- Recreation Mgt.
- Archaeology, Paleontology, \* Geological Research

### Definition;

cultural resources: “the dynamic interplay between people and their environment, expressed in the landscape”

### Pre-Trip Introduction to Joaquin Rocks

#### Cultural history of Fort Hunter-Liggett

- San Antonio Mission
- The Hacienda

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10/16/2004

8:00a.m.

Review Minutes from previous RAC meeting.

Schedule next RAC meeting.

#### Location/Potential Issues:

- Bakersfield
  - o Carrizo Plain
  - o Case Mountain
  - o San Joaquin Oil Fields
- Spring is a good time of year to visit Bakersfield.
- Potential dates will be sent to RAC members to choose schedule for next meeting.

Group discussion on the roles, responsibilities, and logistics required to establish a sub-committee for the Hollister Field Office/CCMA.

*QUESTION:*

*What role will the TRT provide?*

*Hill: Act as a conduit for public input and provide outreach to community and organizations. Help gain consensus on management actions and issues. Generate support for implementation and create awareness of complex management issues.*

*Gorden: One challenge is that Plans propose multiple actions and people expect BLM to follow through.*

*Hill: A major issue is BLM's limit on use of volunteers in the hazardous asbestos area, which is why we are currently exploring avenues to safeguard BLM from liability lawsuits.*

*White: Technical support from academic institutions and scientific experts is important. Essentially, the make-up of the TRT will determine its success.*

*Gorden: What other types of expertise would be useful?*

*White: Air quality, health hazards in the environment, etc.*

*RAC members voiced concern about BLM's ability to support the process.*

- facilitator*
- administrative needs*
- resources*
- "better get it right this time!"*

Meeting Adjourned

Depart for field trip to Joaquin Rocks.